

ONE SHILLING

# TYRANNY COULD NOT QUELL THEM!

HOW NORWAY'S TEACHERS  
DEFEATED QUISLING DURING  
THE NAZI OCCUPATION AND  
WHAT IT MEANS FOR  
UNARMED DEFENCE TODAY

*By Gene Sharp*

WITH 28 ILLUSTRATIONS, INCLUDING ORIGINAL  
PRISON CAMP DRAWINGS

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## FOREWORD

by Sigrid Lund

**G**ENE SHARP'S Peace News articles about the teachers' resistance in Norway are correct and well-balanced, not exaggerating the heroism of the people involved, but showing them as quite human, and sometimes very uncertain in their reactions. They also give a right picture of the fact that the Norwegians were not pacifists and did not act out of a sure conviction about the way they had to go. Things happened in the way that they did because no other way was open. On the other hand, when people acted, they were steadfast and certain.

The fact that Quisling himself publicly stated that the teachers' action had destroyed his plans is true, and meant very much for further moves in the same direction afterwards.

The action of the parents, only briefly mentioned in this pamphlet, had a very important influence. It reached almost every home in the country and everyone reacted spontaneously to it.

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE Norwegian teachers' resistance is one of the most widely known incidents of the Nazi occupation of Norway. There is much tender feeling concerning it, not because it shows outstanding heroism or particularly dramatic events, but because it shows what happens where a section of ordinary citizens, very few of whom aspire to be heroes or pioneers of resistance, are suddenly faced with terrifying situations of a kind which they were never trained to meet.

Those who showed weaknesses will probably never get over it. Those who found unexpected strength in their hearts will perhaps always feel stronger.

The journey to the camp at Kirkenes and the decisions taken before it exemplifies a kind of test that might be put to anyone anywhere in the years to come.

The main lesson seems to be that people are able to stand up for what they believe and find their own leaders irrespective of how the military situation develops.

It is of great value that Gene Sharp, as a man from another country and as an experienced specialist in studying non-violent resistance, has undertaken to write about the "Kirkenes Journey." His account reveals an intimate knowledge of his subject and an ability to concentrate on those aspects which make the journey intensely interesting to those who ask about the potentialities of non-violent resistance in the future.

PROFESSOR ARNE NÆSS.

Institute of Philosophy and the History of Ideas,  
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# Tyranny Could Not Quell Them

## UNDER OCCUPATION

Members of Quisling's Norwegian fascist party—Nasjonal Samling—are seen during the Nazi occupation of Norway parading through the streets of Hamar, a small town about 130 kilometres north of Oslo.

Faced with a Norwegian fascist party backed by Nazi Germany's occupation troops, school teacher Haakon Holmboe carried on his work in Hamar as the area contact for the Norwegian resistance movement.

Mr. Holmboe was one of thousands of Norwegian teachers who non-violently resisted Quisling's efforts to use them to indoctrinate the youth and organise them as a pilot project in the establishment of the Corporate State in Norway.

He was among about 1,000 of these teachers who were arrested and sent to concentration camps. After the arrests he became recognised among them as one of their leaders.

With the assistance of Mr. Holmboe the facts about this dramatic episode in Occupied Europe were gathered for Peace News by Gene Sharp when Assistant Editor, during three trips to Norway.

Months in preparation, this true story is of significance for all who are interested in examining non-violent resistance as a method of achieving and defending

This account is extensively illustrated with rare photographs and with drawings made by imprisoned teachers. Many of these have been made available.

By Gene Sharp, M.A.

*Assistant Editor, Peace News, 1955-1958,  
Now conducting research on totalitarianism  
and non-violent resistance under a stipend  
from the Institute for Social Research, Oslo.*

THE STORY OF NON-VIOLENT  
RESISTANCE BY THE  
TEACHERS OF NORWAY  
UNDER NAZI OCCUPATION  
AND ITS MEANING FOR  
UNARMED DEFENCE



Mr. Holmboe is seen with his daughter, Mari, wife Lotte, and sons Jon and Jens in December, 1943. He is now rektor (principal) of a high school near Oslo. In 1950-51 he spent four months in the United States and two months in England and France on a UNESCO fellowship, studying the teaching of human relations in schools.

**A NORWEGIAN** policeman carrying out the orders of Vidkun Quisling's pro-Nazi regime knocked on the door of the home of Haakon Holmboe at 6 a.m. on March 20, 1942. Mr. Holmboe, then a teacher in the small town of Hamar, about 130 kilometres north of Oslo, was under arrest.

During that morning and the following days about 1,000 other teachers were also arrested all over Norway. They were some of several thousand teachers who had openly defied Quisling's puppet régime in the Norwegian province of Hitler's Third Reich.

The events which preceded and followed

these arrests may go down in history as one of the most courageous and successful struggles to date against totalitarianism.

After the arrest of the teachers, Mr. Holmboe became recognised among them as a leader in their resistance and also served as an interpreter.

Though not a pacifist, he had read a little about Gandhi, and had heard the English Quaker, John Hoyland, lecture about him in Denmark. The knowledge that Gandhi and the Indian people had been able to maintain their struggle non-violently and without arms served as a great encouragement to him in his difficult experiences during the German occupation.

I called on him several times at his home outside Oslo, and this is the story I heard:

## OCCUPATION

**DESPITE** the peaceful intentions of most Norwegians, their country was invaded on April 9, 1940. "When the war came . . . we had no choice," Mr. Holmboe told me.

"People with pacifist ideas were overtaken by circumstances, and a new, unexpected situation."

It was one of the classic problems presented to pacifists, he said. "This is a burglar on your door and you have to fight him."

Avowed pacifists affiliated with *Folkereising mot Krig* (Norwegian section of the War Resisters' International) still refused to sanction armed resistance. The chairman, Olaf Kullman, died in a Nazi concentration camp.

But many pacifist sympathisers who be-

lieved strongly in freedom, and knowing at the time no other way to defend it, turned to violence.

The Norwegian military resistance continued until June 7, but Norway was not able by military means to keep the invader out. The King and Government fled to London, and Norway began a five-year occupation.

### Illegal newspapers

This is not an account of all the resistance during those years. It is the story of how one important section of the Norwegian people, the teachers, non-violently defied the Quisling régime—and won.

After the collapse of large-scale military resistance there was a period of confusion. The people were not prepared

for an occupation. They didn't know what to do or how to do it.

"In the summer of 1940," Mr. Holmboe told me, "there was no feeling, 'Now we are going to resist.'"

A beginning was made in the autumn of 1940 when the Quisling government demanded that all government employees sign an oath of loyalty to the new régime.

Many people refused; members of the Hird (the Norwegian version of the Gestapo) became belligerent and their behaviour caused more people to turn against the régime.

That autumn many illegal newspapers were started and were distributed secretly.

In September, 1941, the people were ordered to turn in their radio sets. They did so. Later, some small radios were smuggled in from Sweden for leaders of the resistance. Mr. Holmboe was proud to have been chosen to have one of these.

The resistance developed as a reaction to the violence of the Quisling régime. "What really helped us in organising resistance groups was the pressure of the Nazis."

### Paper clips

The occupation became harsher, and the resistance became more determined.

"What was done," Mr. Holmboe said, "often seemed ridiculous, but it had the effect of uniting all the opposition forces." These were acts which, if ignored by the authorities, would have had no effect.

Because the regime reacted so heavily against them, these little things became important symbols of resistance, he said.

For example, people began wearing paper clips in their lapels—a sign of "keep together," and in classrooms students took to wearing necklaces and bracelets of paper clips. This angered pro-Nazi students.

Such demonstrations were spontaneous and unorganised.

Then orders were issued that such "demonstrations" were forbidden in schools. Mr. Holmboe was one day requested to search the students for paper clips "worn as demonstrations." He did so, beginning with the pro-Quisling students, much to their indignation.

### And potatoes

Having found none, he was asked slyly by one anti-Nazi pupil if it were now forbidden to fasten papers with clips. He replied that he didn't know, but that as paper clips seemed for some reason to be "dangerous things" now, it might be better to make holes in papers and tie them with string.

Then one day he noticed his pupils wearing tiny potatoes on match-sticks in their lapels. Each day these potatoes became larger—a symbol that the national (anti-Nazi) forces were growing.

Various other devices followed, including the wearing of the smallest Norwegian coin on a pin, with the side showing “H VII”—for King Haakon VII—brightly polished. The first student arrested was charged with committing this “demonstration.”

A similar action on a wider scale took place later in the occupation with considerable effect when, on the King’s 70th birthday, people wore a flower in their button-holes as a symbol of loyalty toward the King and his legal government in London.

Several hundreds were arrested for this, some of whom were kept in prison or concentration camps until the end of the war.

**Under the Nazi occupation there was no connection at all between the length of the sentence and the seriousness of the “crime.”**

Many Norwegians wore red caps as a sign of resistance, and these were made illegal, although there was never any real effort by the Norwegians to make clear to the German soldiers why the cap was worn.

### A secret organisation

In the schools, various regulations met with parries by the teachers, but as yet very little direct defiance. One teacher wrote to the Education Department that he would, as ordered, tear out pages of a history text book containing “propaganda,” if told how to do it without also destroying the opposite sides of those pages which did not contain “propaganda.”

Receiving an order that the uniform of the *Nasjonal Samling* (Quisling’s party) should be respected in the schools, a headmaster in western Norway replied, “Please send a sample of the uniform, as it is unknown here.”

By no means all of the population was involved in the resistance, however, and the occupation authorities had no difficulty in getting labourers, even for building military installations.

Gradually, however, the resistance took more form, and a secret organisation developed all over the country with headquarters in Oslo.

In the autumn of 1941 Mr. Holmboe was made the resistance contact for a large rural district in eastern Norway, with Hamar as its central town.

He was to select a reliable person as the contact for the resistance movement in each professional or occupational group in the area. These would not know each other, so that anyone caught by the authorities would reveal as little as possible if he could not bear the torture.

More and more people were looking for ways of demonstrating their opposition to Quisling’s régime and the occupation. On what issue should the people resist, and how should they do it? “‘How can we do something which can really make our feelings clear?’ was the question on people’s minds,” Mr. Holmboe told me.

In the autumn of 1940 in various groups there had been discussions on “how do we organise our life if the occupation goes on for 30 or 40 years? How can we preserve our national ways instead of adopting those of the occupation?”

“Nowhere through all these discussions did the *idea* of non-violent resistance come in. Instead of an idea, it developed as a way to work—a way to do something. I don’t think we realised the theoretical point at all. We just felt that something must be done and we must do it.”

**Popular sentiment against the occupation was increasing. “People were ready to do anything that was offered. The**

**time was ripe. It was important for us to act,” he said.**

The Quisling régime had been feeling its way. There had been small attempts at introducing the Nazi ideology in the schools. In February, 1941, Quisling’s *Nasjonal Samling* Government had tried in various ways to influence the schools by, for example, decreeing that Quisling’s portrait be hung in each school.

### Quisling began with the teachers

These efforts had aroused strong opposition among pupils and teachers. In face of it the authorities had either given way or allowed their decrees to lapse.

**In February, 1942, however, Quisling sought to institute a Corporate State on Mussolini’s model.**

He began with the teaching profession.

The former teachers’ organisation had been abolished the previous June. Now a new one was established with the head of the Hird as Leader. A decree was issued declaring that all teachers were automatically members of the new organisation.

At the same time a new *Nasjonal Samling* Youth Front modelled on the Hitler Youth movement in Germany was set up with compulsory membership for all young people between the ages of 10 and 18.

The moment for active resistance had come.



Adolf Hitler and Vidkun Quisling.



# DEFIANCE

**T**HE basic points at which the teachers would resist had already been decided. After the old teachers' organisation had been abolished in June, 1941, following mass resignations when the Nazis sought to take it over, a new enonymous leadership arose.

This illegal group of teachers formulated a list of four points of resistance:

(1) Any demand for the teachers to become members of Quisling's party, the *Nasjonal Samling*;

(2) Any attempt to introduce *Nasjonal Samling* propaganda in the schools;

(3) Any order from outside the school authorities;

(4) Any collaboration with the *Nasjonal Samling* youth movement.

These four points, spread among the teachers in December and January, were to be kept in mind and not discussed.

Even if the teachers were imprisoned for their resistance, they should not give way on these issues.

They viewed Quisling's new organisation as part of a larger plan to reorganise teaching methods, and saw that they would soon be expected to indoctrinate their pupils with the Nazi ideology.

On February 11 and 12, 1942, there was a secret meeting of resistance leaders in Oslo. They too saw Quisling's step as the moment they had been waiting for and shared the view of the teachers: if they accepted this beginning, there would be no clear later point of resistance. They would finally have to accept the logical consequences of the first step.

It was decided that the teachers should refuse to become members of the new organisation. Each teacher would be asked to write to the Education Department of Quisling's Government informing it of his refusal to be part of the new teachers' organisation.

A statement, short, simple and easy to remember, was drafted which every teacher was asked to use.

## Leaders arose

Mr. Holmboe described the kind of methods used to spread these orders.

"A friend telephoned me one afternoon," he said, "and asked me to meet him at the railway station. There he gave me a small box of matches.

"He told me we teachers were to follow the lead of those who had met in Oslo, and that all the possible consequences had been discussed."

Then his friend caught the train and was gone.

"The box of matches contained the statement. My job was to circulate it secretly among the teachers in my district. That was all I knew. I didn't know who the 'leaders' were who met in Oslo."



German soldiers with a machine-gun on the palace grounds watch over an important traffic point in Oslo. The University of Oslo buildings are seen on the left. The National Theatre and the Storting (parliament) are nearby.

In the teachers' resistance no leaders were specially selected. They just arose from the situation. Generally, those who had an idea of something to be done were accepted and obeyed.

"In the middle of the fight we never knew from whom the orders came," Mr. Holmboe said. "They were obeyed because they came through people who had put themselves in charge."

## Conscience in revolt

This was the statement he found in the match-box:

"I declare that I cannot take part in the education of the youth of Norway along those lines which have been outlined for the *Nasjonal Samling* Youth

Service, this being against my conscience.

"According to what the Leader of the new teachers' organisation has said, membership of this organisation will mean an obligation for me to assist in such education, and also would force me to do other acts which are in conflict with the obligations of my profession.

"I find that I must declare that I cannot regard myself as a member of the new teachers' organisation."

**Every teacher was to write this statement himself, sign it with his own name, and post it himself to the Education Department of Quisling's Government.**

The idea of having all of the letters in a particular school district gathered together and posted as a group so that everyone could know that the other teachers had also written was discussed and rejected.

Mr. Holmboe told me that there was an inarticulate feeling among the teachers that "this type of passive reaction is of course dangerous and 'they' have their ways of stopping us, but it is the only way we have to express our opposition and we must do it."

Isolated teachers in the mountains tried to keep contact with teachers in other districts, but whether this was possible or not, each was to take personal responsibility for his own action.

One nervous teacher in the mountains, before posting his letter telephoned long distance to Mr. Holmboe to be sure that everyone else was really carrying out the plan—despite the probability that the telephone was tapped.

The letters were all to be posted on the same day, Feb. 20, 1942.

# MASS ARRESTS

OF the 12,000 teachers in Norway, between 8,000 and 10,000 responded to the call and wrote to Quisling's Education Department dissociating themselves from his new teachers' organisation.

"If there had been even as many as 4,000 or 5,000," said Mr. Holmboe, "we should have regarded the action as a success." He added that it was "very, very moving to see the reaction.

"When the demonstration succeeded it gave us a pleasant feeling that so many people had the courage to stand up. It gave us a feeling of not being alone, a feeling of strength.

"It was a matter of conscience," he continued. "We just couldn't do those things. We could not have looked into the faces of family and friends if we had not made this protest."

Other professional groups were also conducting their own protests. The Bishops of the State Church who had already protested about the *Nasjonal Samling* Youth Front resigned their official posts on February 24, while retaining their spiritual duties. (The non-violent resistance by Norway's Churchmen is another saga that deserves to be told.)

On the same day 150 university professors also protested against the N.S. Youth Front.

## Government tactics

On Feb. 25 the authorities announced that the teachers' protest would be regarded as official resignations of their appointments and if they persisted they would be fined.

The same day the Education Department announced that all schools would be closed for a month "for lack of fuel."

The falsity of this excuse was obvious. Wood is a usual fuel in Norway, and the forests stretch almost the whole length of the country. Further, the weather had become mild after a severe cold spell.

The Quisling Government, Mr. Holmboe explained, was "panic-stricken." By closing the schools and thus dispersing the teachers it hoped to weaken their solidarity and break their resistance.

From all over the country came offers of fuel to keep the schools open.

Actually the "fuel holiday" proved to be the means of spreading the news of what had happened, for the official newspapers had published nothing about the teachers' resistance. People began asking why the schools had *really* closed. The facts got around.

## Financing rebellion

The Leader of Quisling's new teachers' organisation then announced that in such and such districts 100 per cent. of the teachers had become members. But many knew these were isolated school districts which had only one or two teachers.

On March 7 the official newspapers announced that 300 teachers would be called to do "some kind of social work in the north of Norway."

March 15 was set as the deadline for compliance, and resisting teachers were threatened with loss of jobs, pay and pensions. The official newspapers finally referred to the protest, while playing it down as much as possible, but the warnings were issued only in circulars from the Education Department addressed to the teachers.

In response to this threat, preparations were made for financial difficulties teachers and their families might face. Most of

them had already been contributing two per cent. of their incomes for financing the resistance. Other people now joined this plan.

Mr. Holmboe received Kr. 20,000 (about £1,000) from a resistance contact for teachers in his district. He is still uncertain of its origin, but thinks it came from the Government-in-exile.

No one asked for or expected receipts. During the occupation "the trust between people was amazing."

During the "fuel holiday" teachers began teaching in private homes to show their willingness to do their job.

## Letters of protest

Tens of thousands of letters of protest from parents, and some from others, were posted on March 6 to the Education Department. This move was probably organised by the resistance leaders. Reliable figures are not available, but probably somewhat less than ten per cent. of all the parents of pupils in the country took part.

Heavily burdened, but smiling, postmen carried bag after bag of protest letters to Quisling's Education Department. By signing their own names, Mr. Holmboe said, the parents made a personal contribution and became "committed to resistance."

**March 15—the deadline for compliance—came and went. The teachers remained defiant.**

**On March 20 and the few days following about 1,000 teachers were arrested. There were no women among them. The arrests did not terrorise the people.**



Several of the 20 teachers held immediately after their arrests at the local prison at Hamar are seen during an "airing" in the prison yard.

The policeman who came to arrest Mr. Holmboe was an ordinary Norwegian policeman, not a member of Quisling's party. He was "very decent" and waited an hour for Mr. Holmboe to make preparations.

Whether or not ordinary Norwegian policemen ought to have carried out such orders for arrests and other instructions from the Quisling government has been often discussed since.

The selection of teachers for arrest appeared haphazard. The authorities did not always arrest those whom they feared most. Apparently, they thought the weaker ones would be easier to break down, and therefore some should be included in the arrests.

What Quisling's régime most wanted was to compel the teachers to abandon their resistance publicly.

It was often left to the police to decide whom to arrest. And where the police were not *Nasjonal Samling* members, they sometimes consulted the teachers first.

In one school the police telephoned the principal to say they had orders to arrest eight teachers. The teachers held a meeting to decide who should go, considering such factors as age, health and dependants. Then the principal telephoned their names to the police.

After the arrests, the clergy made a statement in the churches at Easter about the relationship between parents and their children and nearly all resigned.

Mr. Holmboe spent over a week in the local prison at Hamar with about 20 other teachers, eight of whom were from his own school. The rektor (principal) had also been arrested.

**The approximately 650 teachers arrested in southern and western Norway were then transferred from local prisons to Grini concentration camp.**

Throughout their detention the teachers' families received "from somewhere" the equivalent of their former salaries.

In face of an ultimatum at the camp three teachers gave in. The rest stood firm.

Four days later came another warning: Unless they withdrew their protests, in future they would receive no professional positions, but instead would become part of a labour force.

The German commander of Grini con-

centration camp, *Sturmabführer* (SS Commander) Koch, was nicknamed by the prisoners *Stornfyrsten*—"the tempestuous prince." He always carried a whip and was accompanied by a large dog.

On one occasion the teachers received an expression of sympathy from an unexpected

quarter, following an harangue by Koch which concluded with the words:

"You must not think you will be martyrs, or that a few dirty teachers will be able to stop the New Order for Europe!"

At that point the dog vomited.



**Meal-time for the teachers imprisoned at Hamar. The teacher at front left was nearly 60 years old. Mr. Holmboe is nearest the window on the right.**

## NAZI CAMP TREATMENT

**ON** March 31 the teachers were taken from Grini concentration camp to Jorstadmoen camp, near Lillehammer, about 200 kilometres from Oslo.

At some places along the railway line people learned that the teachers' train was coming through and school children gathered at the stations and sang.

The teachers were locked in cattle cars.

The poorly equipped camp at Jorstadmoen was adapted as a concentration camp for the teachers. No other political prisoners had previously been kept there.

### The Gestapo

When they arrived there were some beds but no mattresses or bedding; cooking vessels had to be salvaged from a junk heap; tools for shovelling snow had to be improvised by the prisoners.

Mr. Holmboe was part of a small group

that reached Jorstadmoen on March 30 directly from local prisons. A second group arrived next evening.

On April 1 the great bulk of prisoners arrived from Grini, making a total of 687.

That day and the next the Germans organised the camp. Teachers were divided into age groups and assigned to barracks. German-speaking teachers were selected as group leaders. The Germans chose Mr. Holmboe as their interpreter.

During these days he became recognised by the teachers as their spokesman and leader.

**The Gestapo created an atmosphere of fear. Orders were crossly shouted. Teachers were kicked on the slightest pretext and were forced to run rapidly wherever they went.**

This intimidation was aimed at producing nervousness and insecurity among the teachers.

### What day is this?

On the third morning there seemed not to be a single German in the camp. No one knew what was going to happen. Un-



certainty and tenseness spread.

For prisoners whose fate lies in the hands of others this is the difficult time. "The hardest things," said Mr. Holmboe, "are not those that happen, but those that might happen, and the time waiting for things to happen."

What were "they" going to do to the teachers? Would it be better to give in? Was it all worth what might happen?

The tenseness grew.

Then one of the teachers said: "Do you remember what day this is?" And someone said: "Is this a good day for us to resign from small sufferings? Remember what Christ endured."

It was Good Friday.

That afternoon the "terrorism" began. It was not the extreme individual torture for which the Nazi regime was notorious—including in Norway—but a more gradual and prolonged "treatment" designed to wear down the teachers' ability to resist.

### The hunger weapon

Hunger and weariness were the chief weapons. In the morning they received a cup of synthetic coffee. At noon a cup of hot water soup—for the German staff had "organised" (the camp slang for stealing) most of the few vegetables allotted for prisoners.

Each was given 150 grams of bread a day—one-fifth of a small loaf of about 1½ lbs. This made four small slices.

They received it at night, and had no more until the following night. Therefore if they were to have anything to eat next morning they had to exercise extreme restraint and eat only two thin slices at night despite their hunger.

Some were unable to do this and therefore went hungry the next morning. A few so disciplined themselves that they put aside a little of their daily ration of bread for a possible time when there would be no food at all.

Each morning there were 1½ hours "torture gymnastics," including crawling and running in very deep snow. Men up to 59 years old were treated "more or less as young people."

Then followed 1½ hours heavy work—"idiotic work" the teachers called it—much of which was shovelling heavy snow. This was followed by another one and a-half hours crawling and running in the snow.

People who have never run in snow reaching well above the knees cannot know how much effort it requires.

After 4½ hours "treatment" there

was an hour's break and lunch—one cup of hot water soup.

On that first Saturday afternoon while the rest of the teachers were being put through the afternoon session, the 76 older teachers—aged 55 to 59—were interrogated. Before the questioning the younger teachers made it clear that if the older ones wished to back down because of their age it would be understood and not held against them.

Mr. Holmboe said that as the older men were brought in one by one the Germans

were really surprised as each refused to withdraw his protest.

The meaning was clear: if the older men had not yet broken down there was little chance that the younger men would.

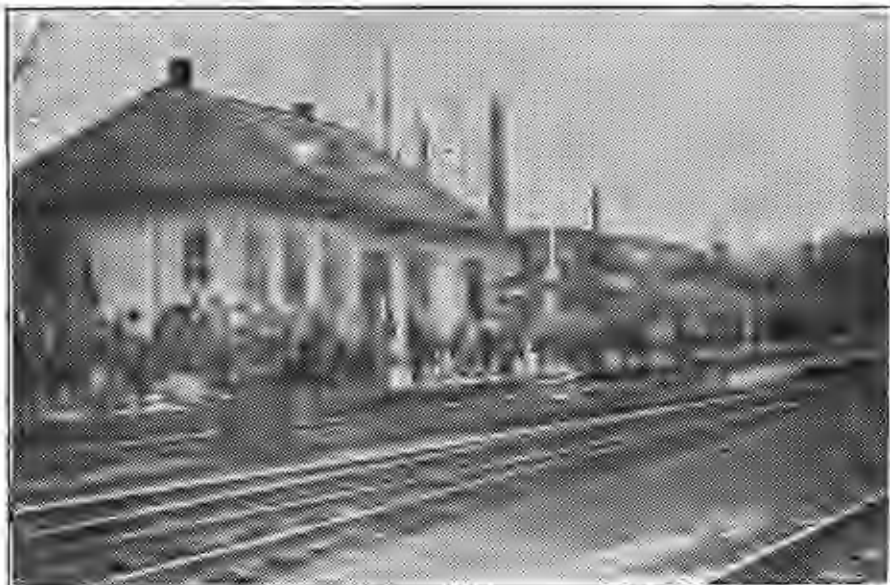
And so the treatment was resumed. No one knew how long it would last.

While the older men were being questioned that afternoon the usual afternoon treatment continued for the others: two or three hours repeat of the morning session.



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Forty-five teachers were crowded into each of the cattle trucks in which they were transported from Grini concentration camp to Jørstadmoen. The picture (above) was taken from the platform (below) of Bryn station in Aker. When it was learned that the train was coming children gathered at stations along the route to sing. The clock at Bryn station, below, shows 3.50 p.m. The teachers' train, for which the children are waiting, arrived at 4 p.m.



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Meanwhile, in the outside world, the Quisling authorities prepared to re-open the schools.

They announced that all who began working would automatically be registered as having joined the new organisation and

their subscriptions would be deducted from their pay. The opening in Oslo and Aker was delayed, but the rest opened on April 8.

But on reporting for work the teachers repudiated membership of Quisling's new teachers' organisation, and made a

statement in their classes on the first day.

**Mrs. Holmboe herself was one of these teachers. She said their was tenseness, then each teacher, before the class, "spoke of conscience, the spirit of truth, and our responsibility to the children."**

But, she said, she was not worried about her own possible arrest. The feeling of solidarity was so strong that she knew someone would take care of her two children.

## Collapsed

Meanwhile, the treatment of the prisoners continued.

Two cases of pneumonia developed. The prisoners were not clothed for snowy weather and there were no facilities for drying clothes.

One of the teachers collapsed during a session of the "treatment" and was carried to the medical centre. It was rumoured that he was dead.

A German officer came storming in, demanding of the teacher lying on the floor: What is this? Why are you behaving in this way? The teacher, regaining consciousness, replied that there was "too little food, too much to do."

But if only you give in, everything will be all right. Why do you persist?

"Because I am a Norwegian."

## Like martyrs

The "terrorism" had continued, Sunday and Monday and Tuesday. After 11 a.m. Tuesday various groups were taken from their work for questioning: "Will you sign . . . ?"

The old men were marched in, refused to retract their protests, and were marched out again. Then the men began saying "No" as they entered the room, giving the Germans no chance even to question them.

"They were like martyrs going to their persecution," Mr. Holmboe said.

At least one of the most determined of the teachers was a pacifist; pacifists and non-pacifists stood solidly together.

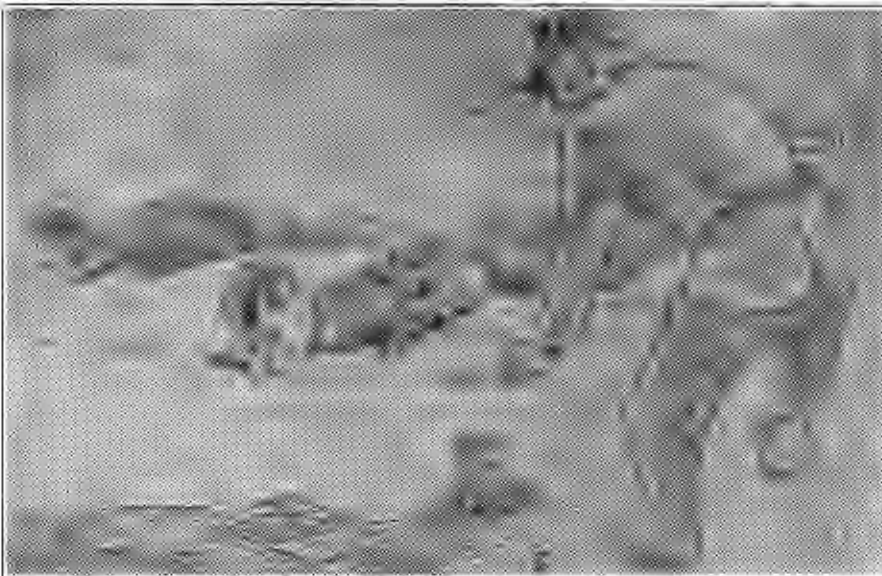
Only 32 out of the 687 gave in and were brought out of the camp. With this the Germans' theory that the teachers' determined resistance was caused by one section intimidating the rest collapsed.

The terrorism resumed: torture-gymnastics, hard work, almost no food.



David Andersen—Cappelen Publishers

On their way to Jørstadmoen from Grini concentration camp, the teachers arrived by rail cattle-trucks at 2.30 a.m. at Fåberg station. They were forced marched—often at the double—the few kilometres to Jørstadmoen camp. The march in darkness was described as a "nightmare."



Cappelen Publishers

Teachers crawling with their hands behind their backs in the snow as part of the "torture-gymnastics" ordered by the Gestapo at Jørstadmoen. This drawing is by David Anderson, one of the teachers.

# INTO THE ARCTIC

**I**N the "outside world" the other teachers who had not been arrested and were still defying Quisling's demands were facing a difficult time.

Rumours began to spread that the Gestapo were going to shoot ten of the teachers held at Jørstadmoen; or one in every ten; that they were going to be sent to no-man's land in the far north between the German and Russian armies to destroy the land-mines, and to certain death.

"I know someone who works at the Minister's office and . . ." "I know people at the office of the German headquarters and they told me . . ." "I know . . ."

All these rumours had one thing in common: something drastic was going to happen to the prisoners if the other teachers who had not been arrested didn't withdraw their protests.

There was reason for such rumours: Norwegians had been shot before and were afterwards. Later, for example, 18 young men who had tried to escape to England were shot in a day at Grini; in Trondheim 34 prominent men were shot in a single day in revenge for Norwegian sabotage.

## The wives' problem

The teachers who had not been arrested wrestled with the problem: should they give in, or should they maintain their protests, taking the chance that their action might mean the execution of friends and husbands? "We didn't know what to do," Mrs. Holmboe told me.

**Then they made their decision.** "I went as a wife," Mrs. Holmboe said, "to one man who wanted to give in and said, 'The wives don't want you to give in. We will take the chance.'"

Mr. Holmboe said their action made "the greatest impression on me of anything in the whole struggle. We who were arrested didn't feel we'd done very much, but our colleagues in the schools stood firm in spite of this heavy pressure." He was glad the decision had not been his to make.

## Cattle truck journey

The terrorism, which had begun on Good Friday, had continued through the following Wednesday. The pace on Thursday was a little slower with only the heavy "idiotic work" and no "torture-gymnastics." On Friday there was nothing.

Mr. Holmboe did not know what the teachers in Jørstadmoen camp would have

done if the treatment had gone on two or three days more, or until the first ten died from it. "Or, if they'd shot ten—what then?"

But they did not have to face that problem. For the treatment there was ended. All of them were taken away from Jørstadmoen; 499 began their journey north. The others were taken back to Grini.

**Mr. Holmboe would have been the 500th to go north, but, ill with pneumonia, he was left behind temporarily.**

The 499 began their cattle-truck rail journey northwards to Trondheim at midnight on April 12, 1942.

The slow train trip across southern Norway was a dramatic event for the whole country. The refusal of the teachers to give in had a great effect on the people as a whole," Mr. Holmboe said.

As the train passed through the mountains, farmers came to the stations where the prison train stopped briefly, offering milk for the teachers, but the German guards drove them away.

## Medicines refused

After 17 cold hours in the cattle-trucks the train arrived at Trondheim. The 499 were then crammed into a small steamer—the Skjerstad—which had been built to carry 100 passengers.

A doctor—a member of Quisling's party—examined the conditions on the boat and was horrified. He telegraphed Quisling ask-

ing that the voyage be stopped. His request was ignored.

**There was illness among the teachers; they asked the Gestapo authorities for medicines or a doctor. The request was refused.**

The Red Cross tried to provide help, but the medical supplies were seized by the Gestapo guards.

## Will they drown us?

The teachers knew nothing of their fate. Many thought the over-loaded boat would be put to sea and sunk, the blame being laid on Allied submarines or bombers.

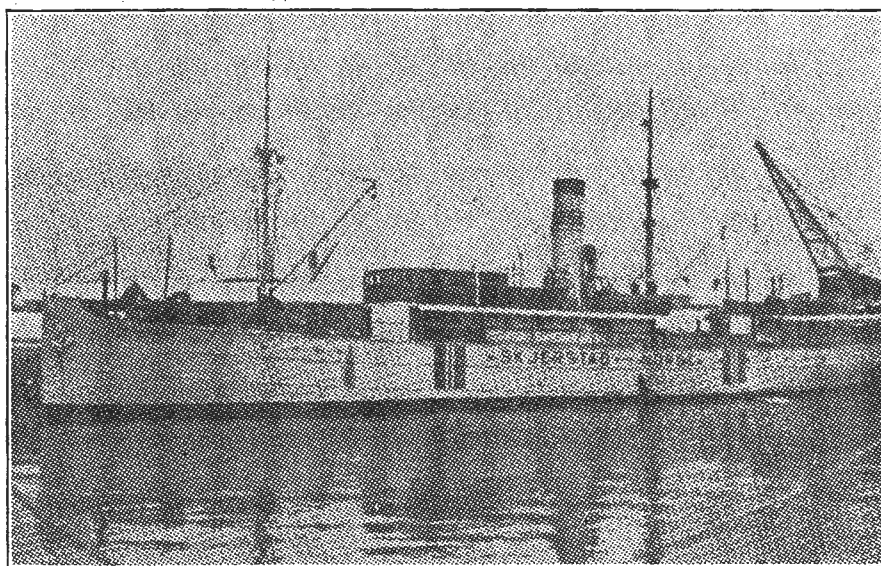
"The days before things happen are more terrible than the days they happen," Mr. Holmboe reminded me. A few suffered emotional breakdown from fear. Some would have withdrawn their protests then, but the Germans did not ask them to.

On April 15 the steamer left Trondheim and began its long and very hazardous voyage to the far North of Norway. Still the teachers did not know their fate. The voyage took 13 days, stopping three times, and the food was very poor.

Yet even in these surroundings the prisoners organised lectures and choirs to occupy themselves.

Several smaller ships—carrying supplies and ammunition for the Germans, it was thought—accompanied the Skjerstad, for their own protection, not that of the teachers, as the Allies knew of the teachers boat.

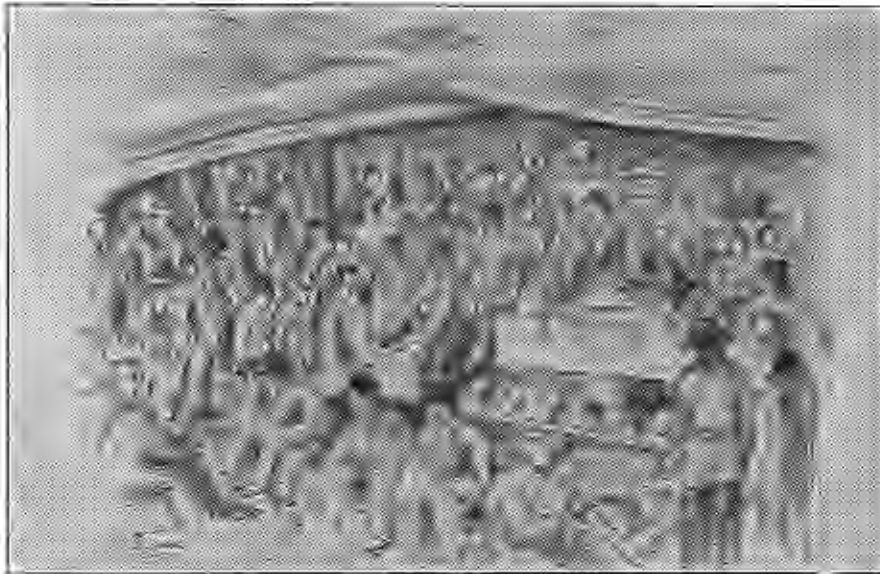
**On April 28 it arrived at Kirkenes, a small town near the Finnish (now Rus-**



Cappelen Publishers

**The Skjerstad into which were crowded 499 teachers on the 13-day voyage from Trondheim to Kirkenes.**





H. Amland—Cappelen Publishers

#### Crowded conditions on the Skjerstad.

sian) border, and far beyond the Arctic Circle—close to the German-Russian front. The weather was cold and rough.

In three days the teachers were transferred from the control of the Gestapo to the authority of the *Wehrmacht*—the German army.

Meanwhile, back at Grini on April 26, after once more refusing to give in, 153 teachers began their journey to Kirkenes, by cattle-truck train, and then in a small steamer called the "Finmarken."

Several extremely sick, feeble and crippled teachers remained at Grini.

#### Pacifists seized

When the *Finmarken* stopped briefly at Tromsø, about May 8, a representative of the local Gestapo told the teachers of a circular issued on April 25 by Quisling's Education Department.

This was a long and wordy statement, saying in effect that all was settled, that all activities of the new teachers' organisation would stop, and that the schools would re-open.

The teachers on the *Finmarken* were asked what would be their reaction if they were given an opportunity to answer the circular. They said they would sign no retraction of their protests.

Afterwards three of the teachers—two of them pacifists—were locked up on the boat for having been especially vigorous in opposing any concession. One of these declared that his pacifism was the reason

why he would sign no such statement, and the Germans mistakenly supposed him to be one of the leaders.

Nothing further happened on the *Finmarken* about the circular. The boat docked at Kirkenes on May 11, with 147 teachers—six had been left at hospitals on the way.

At Kirkenes the first group of teachers were told of the circular about Quisling's new teachers organisation. The teachers interpreted the circular as an attempt by the Quisling regime to save face while at the same time saying that the new teachers' organisation would be dropped.

As events turned out, the new organisation never actually came into being, and the announced membership fees were never deducted from the teachers' salaries.

They sent a telegram to the Education Department on May 13 saying that with reference to the circular of April 25 they wished to resume their teaching positions. There was no reply.

Meanwhile, the schools in Oslo had finally re-opened on May 7 and the teachers had presented a declaration dissociating themselves from the new organisation.

#### Hay for bedding

At Kirkenes there were no beds, bedding, mattresses or furniture for the teachers. They slept for a while in barracks built for German soldiers. Only a few teachers had brought sleeping bags with them when arrested. Later there were stoves for heating.

Mr. Holmboe asked the German officer if the teachers could take some hay from a nearby haystack for bedding. He refused. A sympathetic German soldier showed Mr. Holmboe how to remove the old straw from the top of the haystack, take the necessary supply of fresh straw, and then replace the old so that the appearance was unchanged.

With very few Gestapo men among the German soldiers, the treatment was less severe than at Jørstadmoen. A few of the Germans were sympathetic and helpful, but the teachers' plight was not easy.



In the barracks at Kirkenes.

# QUISLING ADMITS DEFEAT

**I**N June most of the teachers were moved to another camp which had originally been a silver fox farm. Instead of barracks, they now lived in 17 octagonal huts made of heavy but untreated cardboard with wooden floors.

Only one of them had a window. The roofs were tarred, but when the walls became wet they lost their grip from the frames. The teachers nicknamed the camp *pappenheim*—cardboard home.

A few preferred the fox cages, which consisted of wire netting—top, bottom and sides—and a wooden frame. These teachers were regarded as more sporting than the rest.

About 300 others were housed in stables. In the barns there was hardly room even to lie down. Forty slept in a row, with about a foot's width each, so they all had to turn over at once.

## Dangerous work

At Kirkenes the teachers were required to work. Despite their lack of experience, they were set to unloading from ships large oil drums and heavy crates of supplies.

These supplies sometimes included ammunition, and there was discussion among the teachers as to whether they ought to do this work. They finally decided, however, to proceed but to "go slow."

**They were divided into shifts which worked day and night seven days a week. Considering their lack of training it was extremely risky; one teacher was killed, two men lost an eye each, one broke a leg and both arms.**

Part of this work involved unloading supplies of food for the German troops and putting it into storage. This provided opportunities for supplementing the meagre coarse rations. They "organised" food and even brought some back to those who were unable to work through illness.

The "organised" food varied greatly in quality and quantity, but sometimes there was even chocolate, butter, cigarettes and jam. One teacher even managed to get someone from the village of Kirkenes to send some by post to his family in southern Norway, where the food shortage was serious.

More, often, however, the teachers did not have enough themselves.



Odd Halsen—Cappelen Publishers

**Teachers being searched at Kirkenes.**

When caught with stolen food, teachers were locked up for a period.

## Food pinching—a morale stimulant

The German soldiers, however, were doing far more stealing than the hungry teachers. Some of the food even reached the black market in Berlin.

The quantities missing became so large that there had to be an investigation. The blame was, of course, put upon the teachers.

They were lined up, and the food found in their quarters was placed before them as they were scolded. During this lecturing one enterprising teacher managed to steal some of the articles which had been placed in front of the line-up.

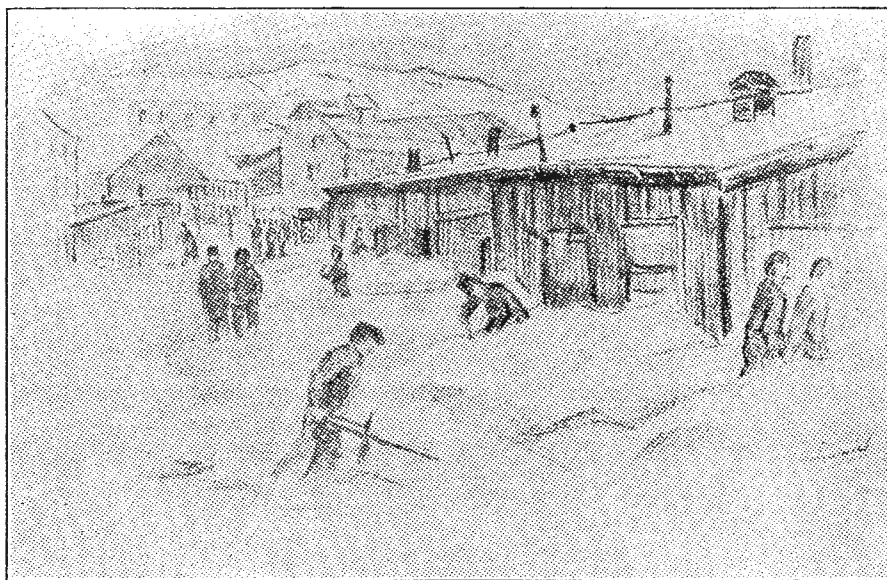
Mr. Holmboe said that this ability to get away with such "organising" was of greater morale value than food value.

There were also some Russian prisoners at Kirkenes. "They were terribly treated," said Mr. Holmboe. "Some of them were shot."

## Effect on the people

While at Kirkenes the teachers did not feel particularly heroic nor much concerned with victory or defeat. They were too much "concerned with immediate affairs."

They were badly equipped for the cold. Some, Mr. Holmboe thought, would have withdrawn their protests after a month or



**The stables, in which 300 teachers lived during part of their period at Kirkenes, during a snow storm on June 6, 1942. The entrance gate is seen near the far end of the stables.**

H. Amland—Cappelen Publishers



two of this, but after their transit from the south they were given no chance.

While it was thus impossible for them to have given in if they had wanted to, the Norwegian people regarded them as heroes for maintaining their resistance. "In many ways our victory was organised by the enemy," Mr. Holmboe said.

The teachers' deportation to Kirkenes had had an enormous effect on both the Norwegian people and the Quisling régime.

### "You've destroyed everything"

While it consolidated the opposition of the people to the occupation and the puppet government, Quisling and his followers became furious.

Quisling knew that if he took harsher measures against the teachers he might irrevocably increase public antagonism against the regime.

Quisling had good reason to be angry.

The new teachers' organisation had been the pilot project of his whole plan for instituting the Corporate State, and the teachers had thwarted it.

This was shown better than anywhere else at the village of Stabekk on May 22.

Vidkun Quisling arrived by car at the Stabekk *gymnasium* (high school). His Minister of Education and the head of the police for the whole country accompanied him. Twenty members of the Hird (Norwegian Gestapo) surrounded the school.

### 'Arrest us, too'

The teachers were called together. Quisling stormed and raged and shouted at them. His voice could be clearly heard outside the building.

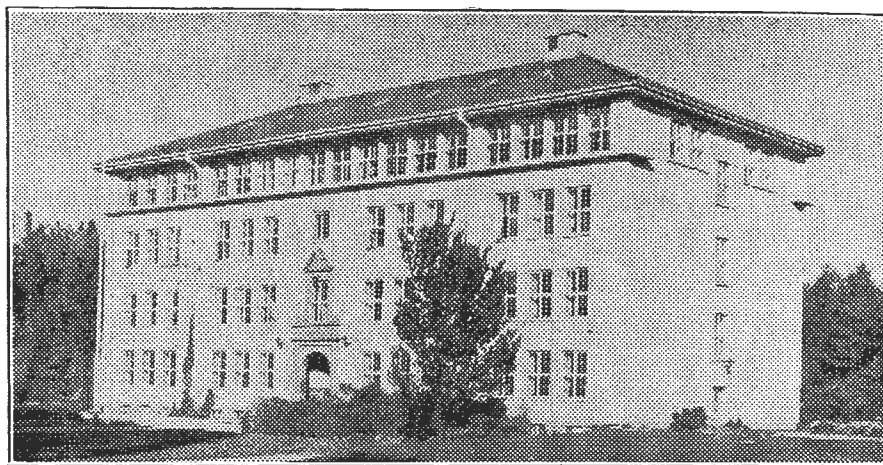
He ended with the words: "You teachers have destroyed everything for me!"

"That sentence was a triumph for us," Mr. Holmboe said. "It became a slogan and was taken up and quoted everywhere afterwards." It meant, he said, the teachers had blocked Quisling's whole plan of organising the new Corporate State.

Quisling ordered the arrest of all the teachers at that school. Next day, a few teachers who had been absent during Quisling's visit, went to the prison where their fellow teachers were held.

"We should be arrested, too," they said.

At Kirkenes the days, weeks and months passed. The brief Arctic summer came and went, and the weather turned cold again.



The high school at Stabekk, where Quisling admitted defeat, as it appears today. Although remodelled after a fire in 1954, its appearance is basically the same as it was in 1942.

## THE TEACHERS RETURN

THE days and weeks and months passed—for the people in the "outside world." But for the teachers, as for all prisoners, time was counted in minutes and hours and days. But finally, even for them, the days grew into weeks and the weeks into months.

While the time passed slowly for the prisoners at Kirkenes camp, the Norwegian people did not forget them. Their spirit rose as they spoke of the sufferings and the bravery of the teachers, and their resistance stiffened.

The intransigence of the authorities increased the impact of the protest.

The longer the teachers were kept at Kirkenes the more the nation remembered them. The authorities thus "helped us to put up a much longer and braver fight than otherwise would have been possible," Mr. Holmboe told me.

The spring grew into summer, and that became autumn. Still the teachers unloaded the boats and tried to keep warm.

Although living in misery, they organised lectures, composed songs and sang, although there were no musical instruments. Others drew sketches and some painted (with paints smuggled into the camp).

As autumn wore on and winter approached the weather became very cold, for they were well beyond the Arctic Circle.

Despite the hardships and the cold, there was practically no serious illness in the

camp. Some attributed this to the Arctic air killing disease-causing bacteria.

### Doctor's report

Yet there were less serious illnesses, and a considerable number of teachers were no longer able to work. A German doctor examined them. Perhaps as a result of his report, it was announced that the Germans were willing to send back those who were unfit.

The teachers were surprised.

The German doctor followed the advice of the representatives of the teachers and selected 150 who were to be sent home.

But the night before they were to depart the German authorities announced that before they left they must sign a declaration that they were willing to resume their positions in the schools as members of the new Nazi teachers' organisation (which had actually not come into being).

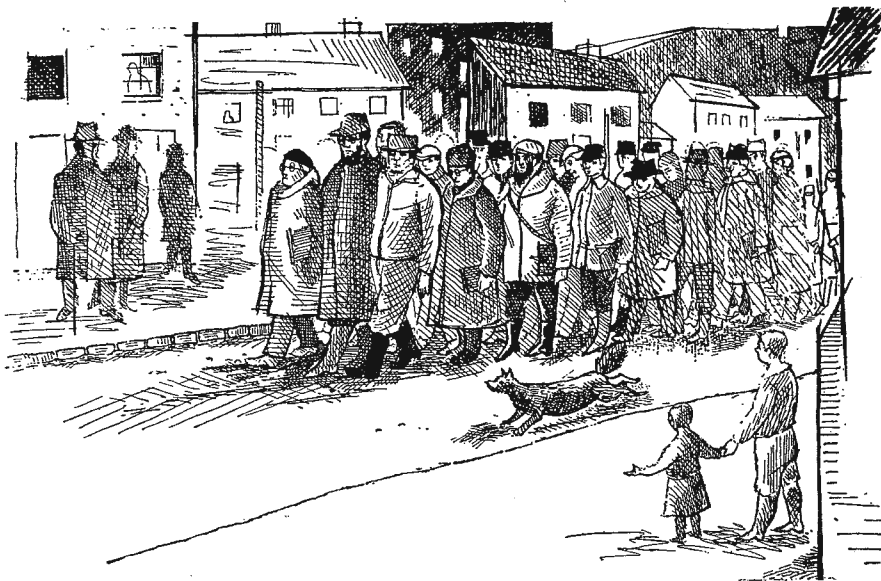
What should they do? They were ill. Although only late August the weather was gradually becoming colder and colder. The winter was coming, and they did not have adequate clothing.

Yet, after five months of resistance, should they give in now?

### Hard decision

The rest of the teachers held a meeting. The discussion was earnest. It was a difficult problem.

Some argued that each person must make



George Coxwell, from an original by David Andersen

A group of Norwegian teachers during their Arctic detention being marched by German guards (in the background) through the village of Kirkenes on their way to work. The march was always a long one, and the teachers tried to walk as slowly as possible in order to reduce the working time and hence the profit the Germans could gain from it. The inhabitants showed their respect by standing silent. The original of this drawing was made on May 17, Norway's Constitution Day, which is usually celebrated throughout the country in a major way. The teachers associated this drawing with a quotation from one of Norway's outstanding writers, Bjørnson: "Who would count the lost battles on the day of victory?"

his own decision, but they could not personally sign such a statement.

Others argued that just as in a war it is sometimes necessary to withdraw and for the injured and ill to leave the front lines as non-combatants, while others continue the fight, so it was now.

This view was supported by Mr. Holmboe. In addition, the statement they were asked to sign was in German, and this particular struggle was not against the German Army but against the Quisling regime.

The majority concurred. They recommended that the teachers who were ill sign the statement. They did so.

Those papers, however, never left the Kirkenes camp, and were never used for propaganda against the teachers.

## No statement signed

So it was that about 150 teachers were sent home and released. One of them took a sketch, made at the camp, home to Mr. Holmboe's family.

Then on September 16 a second group of about 100—who had signed no statement—were sent back.

Mr. Holmboe was among the group which still remained at Kirkenes. They did not know their fate. Even if the Germans intended to send them back as well the time was short.

There was a shortage of shipping. If they did not leave Kirkenes before

December they might not be able to leave before spring. Although the sea generally does not freeze at Kirkenes, shipping would soon be extremely dangerous. The "dark time" of the year with no sunshine in the Arctic was approaching, and the black-out of lighthouses along Norway's jagged coastline spelt danger to all shipping.

The teachers became nervous. The temperature dropped 20 degrees (C) below

freezing. Then on November 4 the approximately 400 remaining teachers were put on a steamer, and began a 16-day trip south to home.

**They also had signed no statement.**

As the teachers were released the news travelled rapidly over the country that the men—who had become national heroes—were coming back without having given in to Quisling.

## Triumphant return

People met the train at the railway station. The ex-prisoners were given free lodging at the best hotels. Flowers and food—which was very scarce—poured into their homes.

Mr. Holmboe arrived home on Nov. 20—exactly eight months after his arrest. Congratulations poured in, including some from people he did not know personally, who wanted to demonstrate their support.

Despite the stresses of the past months his wife remained calm. In 1939, when her husband had been called into the neutrality service to guard against the belligerents' violating Norway's neutrality, "I felt my knees were cut off," she told me. "Later, when the war came, and he was arrested twice, I felt more and more quiet."

No one had known what would happen when the teachers began their protest, Mr. Holmboe told me, but "the experience showed to everyone the strength of non-violent resistance."

The teachers had won more than a small skirmish. After Quisling had encountered further difficulties in his effort to impose the Corporate State, Hitler personally intervened and ordered that the whole project of setting up a Corporate State in Norway should be abandoned.

Now, sixteen years later, what does Mr. Holmboe think can be learned from this experience?



H. Amland—Cappelen Publishers

Teachers during their return voyage from Kirkenes.

# SIXTEEN YEARS LATER

**SIXTEEN** momentous years have passed in which to gain a perspective of the teachers' resistance. Are there any lessons to be learnt from that experience, and has it any significance for today?

"The effectiveness of the method we used," said Mr. Holmboe, "is shown by the events themselves: Quisling's plan for the Corporate State was broken down.

"But the question is: 'Under what conditions is it possible to organise this type of resistance?'"

After the war was over, he said, "what came into our minds was, 'Would this opposition have been possible if we had not had the strong feeling that someone was fighting our war?'"

**It was more difficult for the German teachers who resisted Nazism in their homeland, he and his wife agreed, for they had no one on the outside helping them.**

"If it had been a civil war here," Mr. Holmboe thought, "and we had had to oppose the Quisling régime without support from outside, we would never have succeeded."

## Violence also used

The teachers had not chosen methods of non-violent resistance because of any religious feeling of love for the enemy.

"We also had military organisations during the occupation," Mr. Holmboe said, "though they were not large. In fact, many of the teachers, including myself, were active in organising illegal military groups when we got the opportunity. We were willing to use weapons when we had them."

A personal problem he faced was this: If he wanted the Allies to continue the war against Hitler, how could he say the resistance in Norway should completely reject violence, even though he preferred non-violent methods?

"We used non-violent resistance as well because in certain circumstances it seemed the only way in which to work."

After the war when the Norwegian people heard about the resistance in other countries, and that by comparison Norwegian resistance ranked first, they were surprised.

He thought that the success of their resistance, by comparison with that in other

countries, might be due to the fact that they had a more personal way of working.

"In any kind of organised resistance activity," he said, "it is important to engage a lot of people personally..

"People feel a need to do something. Generally that feeling finds expression in violence. If someone is needed to do something risky it gets a ready response, for it involves what someone has called 'living on an heroic plane.'"

It would not have been possible, immediately after the invasion in 1940, to organise resistance like that of 1942, for the people had not been prepared for facing an occupation. They did not know how to resist it.

Their feelings were too confused. Then little by little there grew a feeling of wanting to find ways of resistance.

## Sense of solidarity

"People were eager to do something. They became heroes if they were arrested for illegal activity."

The building up of solidarity was therefore of primary importance. In the teachers' protest it was important for each to feel sure "that others will do it too."

Their experience had shown, therefore,



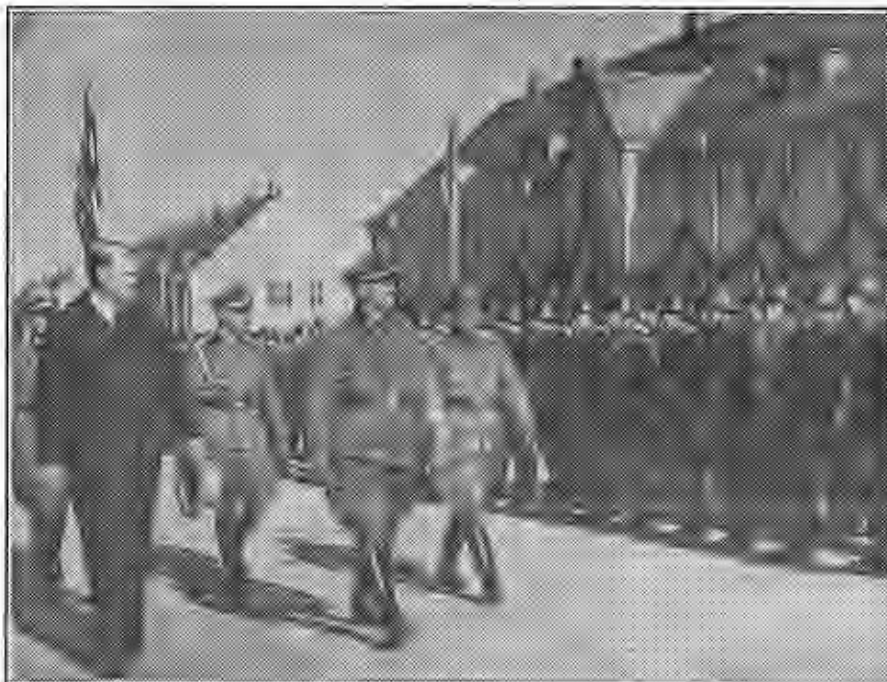
President Franklin Delano Roosevelt paid tribute to Norway's non-violent resistance as well as to Norway's armed resistance. On September 16, 1942, he said: "... if there is anyone who doubts the democratic will to win ... let him

look to Norway ... Norway, at once conquered and unconquerable ... At home, the Norwegian people have silently resisted the invader's will with grim endurance. Abroad, Norwegian ships and Norwegian men have rallied to the cause of the United Nations."

that "illegal opposition on a large scale is dependent upon an elaborate contact system so that things can be done on a large scale. Such actions help people to know that we are not alone."

Moral preparation was also necessary for such resistance, he said.

If he were the Prime Minister of Norway, I asked Mr. Holmboe, would he carry



German SS battalion commander, Waffen-SS Lieutenant-General Juttner, is seen (centre) reviewing Norwegian soldiers after their being sworn in as members of the Norwegian volunteer battalion. Beside him (front left in civilian clothes) is Vidkun Quisling. On Juttner's right is the Norwegian battalion commander, Major Bakke.



The above assembly is listening to Norwegian Defence Minister Nils Handal speaking on Norway's future defence plans at the opening of the new Defence Academy in 1956. As a veteran of the teachers' non-violent resistance in 1942, Mr. Holmboe calls Norway's defence policy "futile" and favours setting up a "non-violent defence academy" where non-violent struggles could be studied and plans laid for unarmed resistance against invaders.

out Norway's present military programme, bearing in mind the realities of modern war and his own experience with non-violent resistance?

He replied: "I think it is futile to try to organise the defence of Norway as they are doing in these times."

It was not good enough to prepare always for a situation that has passed instead of for the future.

### Encourage personal responsibility

(For example, it is now compulsory in Norway for bomb shelters to be a part of every new school building, "but who can think that will be the situation again?")

Mr. Holmboe is still not an avowed pacifist, and does not completely exclude the necessity of military training. But



Nils Handal,  
Norway's Minister of  
Defence.

he thinks it may be a good thing to set up a special "non-violent defence academy" where people could study past non-violent struggles and consider possible plans for implementing this method of defence against tyranny.

He wasn't sure non-violent resistance would always work, but thought it deserved careful consideration and that people should be trained in how non-violent resistance operates.

"In case of a war we have to take into consideration the likelihood of an occupation for a shorter or longer time. Therefore, it is of high importance to prepare ways of resistance as far as possible in advance."

One of the best means of preparing for resistance under occupation, he thought, was to encourage people to take responsibility so that they were ready to take the initiative in a critical situation.

They must "prepare people's minds for maintaining our national and personal individuality during times of occupation and similar situations."

In such situations, he thought, in view of his experience, it was "important to find ways to dramatise, personalise and heroicise action, especially for young people, so as to give them the idea 'Maybe I could

be a hero and still not fight with violence.'

"We do too little," he added, "to investigate these other ways of education for the future."

To what extent are Norwegians today considering their war-time experiences, such as the teachers' struggle, as they prepare to preserve their freedom?

## FEAR REMAINS

"THAT WAS THE GESTAPO headquarters during the war," said a friend in Oslo, pointing to a large building. "Many Norwegians were tortured there."

Here was the clue of the answer to the question I had been asking: Why with Norway's experience with non-violent resistance is the country relying still on military power and the NATO alliance?

The occupation made a deep impression on the Norwegian people.

True, the Norwegians were regarded by the Nazis as Aryans and hence potential supporters of the Third Reich. Hence, their treatment early in the occupation was relatively better than that of the Jews and other *Untermensch* ("sub-humans") in the occupied territories on the Eastern Front who were regarded as fit only for extermination.

But despite this relatively better treatment, the occupation was very harsh.

People were hungry. Freedom was suppressed. The secret police created terror. Many people were arrested, jailed, tortured, sent to concentration camps, deported and shot.

The people have not forgotten this, although the memory does not necessarily mean hatred of the Germans or even of the collaborators.

### Destruction of a dream

After foreign rule by the Danes from 1387 to 1814, Norwegians love both freedom and peace. The Nazi invasion and occupation took away both. Also it destroyed the illusion that peace necessarily comes to those who simply wish for it hard enough.

Norwegians remember almost bitterly the absence of sufficient military strength to repel the Nazi invasion. Many believe that with stronger military preparations, the invasion and occupation would not have come.

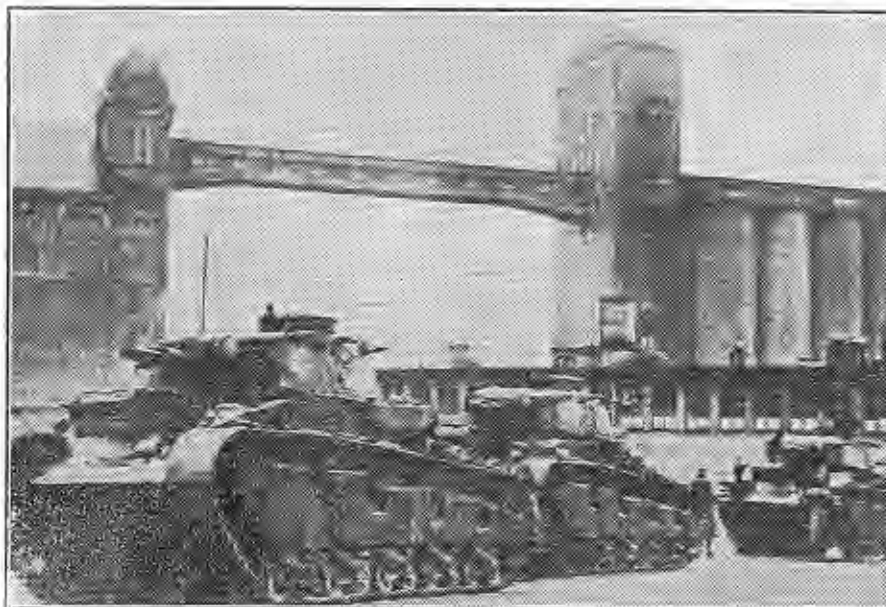
This seems to be largely an emotional reaction and it is not fully realised that a small nation of three and a half million people—about a quarter of the population of Greater London—no matter how great its effort could not by military means have either "deterred" an attack or defeated the overwhelming military might of a determined Nazi regime.

Norway is in NATO today because the people generally fear another war, especially the prospect of a Russian occupation,



Left: German troops entering Oslo in April 1940.





German tanks entering Oslo from the harbour during the invasion in April, 1940.

and believe that the alliance with militarily stronger countries will prevent attack and keep the enemy out in the first place.

### Deportations

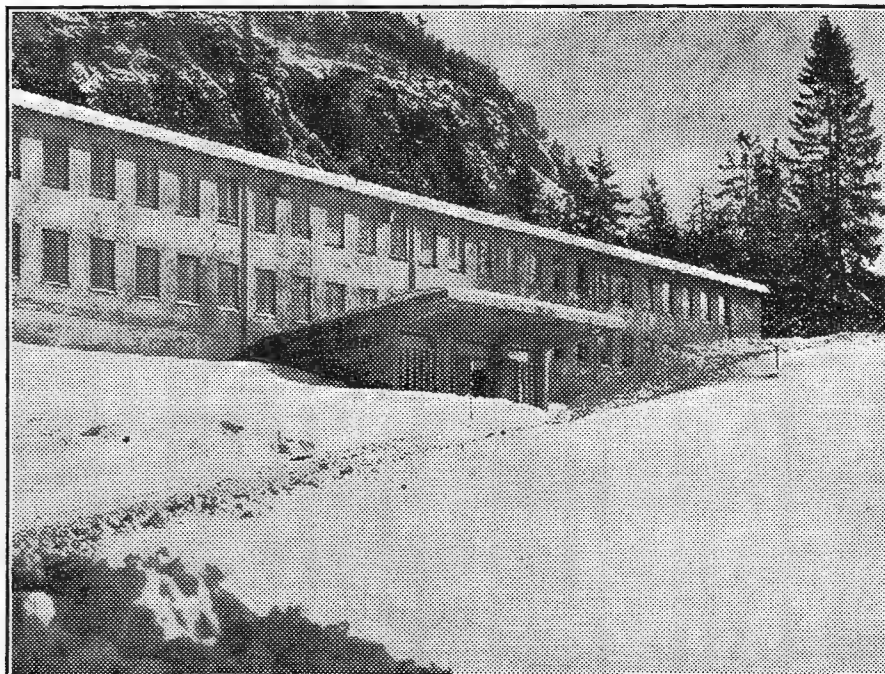
The recent fate of Hungary, and the earlier deportations and ruthlessness in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania have made a great impression in all Scandinavia and have convinced the Norwegians that a Russian occupation would be *much* worse than was the German. Occupation, they fear, might mean large-scale deportations.

The freedom-loving Norwegian people

do not want to relinquish their freedom without a struggle, even in the face of over-whelming odds.

But by preparing for *military* defence, they have become caught up in a sequence of events which might involve Norway in a world nuclear war bringing death to people whose freedom such means were supposed to protect.

Norway with NATO ties, a NATO headquarters, NATO financed technical bases and airfields (though controlled by Norwegians) would be more subject to attack than a neutral Norway should war break



NATO's Norwegian Headquarters at Kolsås.

out. The chances of occupation might also be increased. The very means of warding off the feared occupation might thus bring it about.

### Unarmed defence

A partial recognition of this may lie behind Norway's refusal to have large-scale foreign NATO troops in the country, and the necessity of obtaining the approval of the Storting (parliament) before nuclear weapons can be stored in the country or accepted for Norway's armed forces.

The present policy is accepted as the best available in the hope that the terrifying dangers will not become realities, and that the "deterrent" will deter indefinitely.

**Pleas on the immorality of war will not be seriously heeded by most Norwegians unless they can see that another approach is capable of dealing with tyranny.**

**Is there, then, another non-military method of defending freedom and deterring invasion, a method capable of striking at the heart of tyrannical systems?**

Is non-violent resistance this method? What role does Norway's own experience with non-violent resistance (including the Kirkenes journey) during the Nazi occupation have to play in developing a new unarmed defence programme?

## UNDER-MINING TYRANNY

**NORWEGIAN** non-violent resistance during the Nazi occupation was often more effective in changing policies of the Quisling régime than the armed guerilla activities and sabotage.

During the occupation all kinds of resistance were highly esteemed, Mr. Holmboe told me.

**"For the first time the Norwegian people had experience with non-violent resistance and realised that the leaders of non-violent resistance were as courageous and clever as those fighting in the ordinary way."**

The effect, he believed, had been that people became mentally more prepared to participate in non-violent resistance than before.

Having seen that it is possible to fight without weapons without giving in, they considered non-violent resistance also as a possible method of resistance to oppression.

Over the years, however, a change in attitude toward the various types of resistance seems to be taking place. There have



been practically no major efforts to keep the idea of non-violent resistance alive in people's minds, as there has been for the military method which has had the added advantage of long acceptance and tradition.

**As a result, many Norwegians do not today appreciate the significance of the fact that much of the resistance during the occupation of their country was non-violent.**

The feeling is now strong, some Norwegians told me, that the only *real* resistance is armed resistance, and that any other method is a poor second to be used only if other means are not available. Many feel it is somehow not as manly as violence.

There has developed an idealisation of the small armed bands which lived in the mountains during the occupation, but very little of the more important struggles without arms, such as that of the teachers in 1942. This is reflected in (as well as partially caused by) the Norwegian Government's defence policy.

**I received the clear impression that practically no official consideration is given in formulating that policy to Norway's own experience with non-violent resistance during the Nazi occupation.**

Certain steps to cope with an invasion have been taken, such as decentralising political and military authority so that if one part of the country were occupied, the other parts could carry on *military* resistance. There are also plans for an information organisation in charge of censorship and relations with newspapers, radio, etc.

## Experience valuable

But, so far as I know, there are no efforts by the Norwegian Government to prepare the people to meet an occupation. If plans exist but are kept secret they are of very little value in preparing the people for the difficult experience, either in giving them more confidence or training them, in methods of resistance.

The people's direct experience during the last war would be of considerable value, but this is balanced by the fear of a Russian occupation and the absence of efforts to increase morale and confidence. It might mean that the Norwegian people would be little better prepared for a future occupation than for the last.

Even Norwegian opponents of NATO have generally not developed a comprehensive alternative defence policy including a way of dealing with possible occupation.

A clue to the widespread ignoring of Norway's own experience when considering these problems may lie in a sub-conscious realisation that the lessons to be learned from this are considerable, and the implications too great to be dealt with by only minor adjustments in present policy.

It is, therefore, easier and less disturbing to favour present policies or to oppose them on conventional grounds without seriously examining more fundamental questions.

The 1942 Norwegian teachers' resistance does not prove that non-violent resistance is always successful, or that it can always bring a totalitarian State to its knees. There were circumstances operating in the teachers' favour which are not always present.

**But the "Kirkenes Journey" does prove a point which is often denied; that non-violent resistance can be successful under occupation by such a regime as Hitler's Nazi Germany.**

against a brutal régime long enough for it to fall.

## Tyrants depend on support

This theory was expounded by a young sixteenth century Frenchman, Estienne de la Boétie in his essay *Discourse de la Servitude Volontaire*, in which he wrote:

"... if they [tyrants] are given nothing, if they are not obeyed, without fighting, without striking a blow, they remain naked and undone, and do nothing further, just as the root, having no soil or food, the branch withers and dies."

"... just don't support him [the tyrant], and you will see him like a great



**African volunteers assembling to get a final "briefing" before practising civil disobedience during the "Defy Unjust Laws" campaign in South Africa in 1952. Over 8,000 non-white men and women voluntarily disobeyed apartheid laws and went to prison. The year's struggle infused a new spirit of resistance in the African people and gave them new confidence in their power, as a preparation for the long struggle lying ahead of them.**

Among the advantages which non-violent resistance has over violence in dealing with all tyrannical régimes is this: it strikes at the greatest inherent weakness of all dictatorship.

**All tyranny can continue to exist only so long as its victims continue to obey and serve it. When that obedience, co-operation and service is withdrawn, the tyranny is threatened with collapse.**

It will seek to restore obedience by terror. The problem is, therefore, how to organise and maintain non-co-operation

colossus whose base has been stolen, of his own weight sink to the ground and shatter."

De la Boétie's essay greatly influenced Henry David Thoreau (author of "Civil Disobedience") in America and Leo Tolstoy in Russia, and through them the idea spread to Gandhi, with results we already know.

The prominent non-pacifist American political scientist and historian Karl Deutsch in an analysis of totalitarianism wrote that compliance and enforcement are really interdependent.

“... we could imagine a situation where nobody obeys voluntarily any decision of the totalitarian regime, and where everybody has to be compelled to obey at pistol point, or under ever-present conditions of literally ever-present threat and ever-present supervision... in fact, no government could be carried on on such a basis.”

Quisling in early 1944 (by that time he had had considerable experience with non-co-operating subjects) wrote in a memorandum to Hitler on the deteriorating situation on the Eastern Front: “Russia cannot be held without the support of the population. . . .”

In addition to the Norwegian non-violent resistance there have been other examples. The East German Revolt of June, 1953, the Vorkuta slave labour camp strike in the Soviet Union in 1953, certain aspects of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956, the Indian struggle for freedom under Gandhi's leadership, the resistance movement to apartheid in South Africa, the struggle by Negroes against bus segregation in Montgomery, Alabama, are but a few of these.

## Techniques of resistance

In non-violent resistance the participants—in large or small numbers—act in such a way as to challenge directly the status quo. They may refuse to do things they usually do, or are required by law to do, or they may persist in doing things they usually do not do or are forbidden by law to do.

The various techniques of resistance without violence are aimed at the opponent's moral position, at his ability to carry out policies viewed as wrong, and sometimes at his ability to maintain his authority.

By their determination, direct action, non-co-operation and non-retaliation, the resisters hope to produce:

- a change in the established customs, institutions, policies or regulations, and

- when the choice for non-violent methods is made on ethical grounds, to produce to the degree that it is possible a change of heart in the opponent.

Large-scale non-co-operation and defiance can, however, make it impossible for evil policies to be carried out even though the heart of the tyrant had not yet been melted.

The techniques of non-violent resistance include boycott of goods, services, agencies and institutions; social boycott, strikes (labour, sympathetic, sit-down, sit-in and general); non-payment of taxes, licenses,

etc.; non-co-operation; renouncing of honours, etc.; individual, group and mass civil disobedience; leaflets; speeches; parades; marches; voluntary parallel “government”; the “reverse strike”; the fast (under severe restrictions); non-violent defiance; vigils, and even silence.



East Berlin workers marching through the Brandenburg Gate into West Berlin during the East German Revolt of June 16 and 17, 1953. Non-pacifist Norbert Mulen after investigation declared in the New Leader that the rising “was non-violent, peaceful, unconscious of its own nature.” When demonstrators took over police stations and State Security posts “in each and every case they abstained from using the weapons of the disarmed men; the weapons were carefully locked away.” He said the rebels had been “so deeply repelled by the totalitarian methods of violence and brutality that, as they put it, they did not want a ‘Bolshevik revolution.’ They wanted to be better than their enemy even while they tried to overthrow his rule—therefore, they wanted a ‘decent revolution,’ a revolution without killing, looting, violence.”

# UNARMED DEFENCE

**IF any country had the moral courage to renounce modern weapons as an example to the world and devote its efforts to helping humanity, it seems unlikely to me that that country would ever have to face occupation.**

But it ought not to be forgotten that peace-loving countries which, although armed, posed little military threat to others, have been invaded. Dictatorships do exist and they are often expansive.

Loyalty to moral principles carries with it an obligation to oppose violence and repression.

Also, many feel they cannot give up reliance on violence to defend freedom unless

Do these methods make sense as a defence policy? Commander Sir Stephen King-Hall thinks they make more sense than hydrogen bombs, and many prominent people agree with him. Still more agree that the whole question should be thoroughly investigated.

there is another effective way to do it.

If Norway—or Britain, or the Netherlands, or India, or any country—because of the nature of modern weapons and the moral questions they raise, were to give up military defence and chose to rely only on generating good-will and unarmed defence, great changes would be required in foreign, defence, and even domestic policies. These changes would enhance the content of democracy and freedom as well as assist the unarmed defence programme.

## Corollaries

Unarmed defence has its social, economic and political corollaries, just as has military defence. Among the changes which would be involved are these (not necessarily listed in order of importance or priority):

1. All peoples held in subjection must be given their freedom, and economic exploitation of other peoples ended. None of these can be maintained by non-violent means, and they detract from the moral and psychological effect of renouncing armed power.

2. The social order within the country must be modified to remove exploitation and oppression. That which is built upon violence cannot be defended by non-violent means.

3. A policy of devolution of power within the country should be carried out by the decentralisation of power and decision-making, and by the encouragement of initiative from below.

This produces a society more resilient, dynamic and capable of resistance than one in which people are used to relying on centralised authority for all decisions and actions. People might well feel such a society more worthwhile defending than one in which they had little real voice.

4. The decentralisation of the population and production of food, goods and services would, in addition to other reasons for such a policy, increase the population's ability to maintain resistance.

### Decentralise

Norway's geography and scattered population, for example, would make it possible to disperse very many of the city-dwellers for long periods to farm houses, cottages, villages and hotels in the mountains.

This would increase the strength of resistance by making the population as a whole (a) less accessible to the authorities, and (b) less subject to pressures of the invader because of his reduced control of key supply points for food, fuel, water, utilities, etc.

Conditions in Norway are probably much more favourable for this than in other NATO countries, but similar advantages could be produced elsewhere. Other benefits also come from a more decentralised, self-sufficient social order.

5. Extensive efforts should be made to promote belief in the basic principles of freedom, peace and justice, and the non-violent defence policy should be related to the best in the historical and religious traditions of the society and other civilisations.

This would give the people a feeling that their beliefs and methods were in tune with eternal principles and they were part of a movement of mankind stretching endlessly backward and which will go on endlessly after them. This would create a feeling of inner strength in the people, so necessary in difficult times, as well as enriching their daily lives.

6. Special centres should be established for scholarly study (with full academic freedom) of the many aspects of the non-violent approach. Significantly, this has already begun in Norway.

7. Active efforts by groups and the nation as a whole to relieve suffering, and give help when needed, and oppose injustices anywhere in the world should be started. This should be undertaken for its own intrinsic value, but would have the side-effect of promoting good-will toward that country.

8. Non-violent resistance should be used when necessary within the nation in meeting injustices, countering excessive growth of authority, etc. This would have the dual effect of counteracting undesirable aspects within the society and training the people in the use of such methods.

### Facts

9. Factual and documentary accounts of past cases of non-violent resistance should be widely distributed both among those especially responsible for study of unarmed defence, and the general populace. This could include books, biographies, articles, documentary films, and history texts.

10. Information in popular form about how non-violent resistance works should be provided through such media as newspapers, songs, historical novels, other fiction, films, radio, television, comic books, etc.

11. The creation of a "non-violent defence academy" at which experts and students could analyse and evaluate the various possible strategies, tactics and techniques of non-violent resistance to be used in event of occupation would be necessary.

Advance thought on this is important because resistance to a totalitarian regime is easier and more effective before the regime has consolidated itself, destroyed possible opposition social groups, and "atomised" the population.

The Norwegian non-violent resistance occurred at this early point and stalled Quisling's efforts to make the society fully totalitarian. This emphasises the importance of advance preparation.

### Preparations

12. An elaborate contact system of persons thoroughly versed in unarmed defence should be created throughout the country. These people would (a) study the methods of non-violent resistance, (b) undertake constructive work and relief in times of disasters, and (c) serve as key-points of resistance in case of invasion.

13. The writings of experts at the "non-violent defence academy," academic researchers, and others describing carefully the techniques of non-violent resistance, the rôle of leadership and spontaneity, the factors to observe in preparing for such action, etc., should be widely distributed.

14. Advance preparations should establish what types of issues would be regarded as ones for concentrated resistance in case of occupation, and what types of issues would be regarded as of relatively lesser importance.

Whenever a nation had experience in resisting oppression, this would enhance its ability to do this in the future. Norway's experience, for example, would be most valuable if that country were to adopt an unarmed defence policy.

An invasion of an unarmed country is more difficult to justify at home and before world opinion than of a heavily armed State.

A nation which understood the methods of non-violent resistance, was capable of sustained non-co-operation and defiance, and had the courage to face an occupation would be more difficult to hold down than a nation which had been militarily—and hence psychologically—defeated, before the occupation even began.

The effect on the morale of occupation troops could be considerable in a country the policies of which had inspired goodwill and which relied for defence only on its ability to conduct non-violent resistance, and whose people deeply believed in their ethical principles and way of life.

### Courage

A potential invader might well hesitate before exposing his troops to these conditions. If major Soviet troop disaffection was possible in Hungary during the violent aspects of the Revolution, there is reason to believe even greater disaffection to be possible in the face of courageous but non-violent resistance.

Thus, the deterrent effect of a nation prepared for non-violent resistance to any oppression might well be far greater than that produced by military means today—and without the threat of universal destruction.

It remains to be seen whether the Norwegian people, the peoples of Britain, or some other country will see the significance of heroic non-violent resistance in time for them to adopt it as their way of fighting for freedom.

If mankind survives the next few years it may well be because some nation had the courage to cast off the weapons which threaten to destroy life, and to pioneer a new way of defending and extending their freedom.

If this happens, it will be another great step in man's quest for freedom—a quest which began when man began to think for himself, was championed by those who refused to authority the right to rule their consciences, was strengthened by those who suffered to win freedom of speech, and enriched by those who insisted that institutions must serve, not enslave, mankind.

In this quest for freedom there is a special place of honour for the heroes of the "Kirkenes Journey."

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